

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claim 2 is currently being cancelled.

Claims 1, 3-5 and 9-13 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment and reply amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending and canceling the claims as set forth above, claims 1 and 3-19 are now pending in this application.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 2-5 and 11. By way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of “objected to” (and now canceled) claim 2, whereby presently pending independent claim 1 is now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to claim 2. Claims 3-10 and 12-19 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, and thus those claims are also now in allowable form. Also, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending claim 11 has been amended to place that claim in independent form to include the features of its base claim 1 (there are no intervening claims), and thus presently pending claim 11 is now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action with respect to that claim.

Claim Objections:

In the Office Action, claims 1-19 were objected to because of minor informalities notes on page 2 of the Office Action. The presently pending claims have been amended in accordance with the helpful suggestions provided on page 2 of the Office Action, whereby it is submitted that all of the presently pending claims are unobjectionable.

Claim Rejections – Indefiniteness:

In the Office Action, claims 4 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, for the reasons set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. Claims 4 and 9-11 have been amended to overcome the indefiniteness issues raised in the Office Action with respect to those claims. Thus, all of the presently pending claims are believed to be fully compliant with 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1, 10, 12 and 14-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0024320 to Karasawa et al. in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application JP 2002-48867 to Kazuhiro et al.; claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karasawa et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,475,613 to Itoga et al.; claims 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karasawa et al. and further in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application JP 11-118775 to Masaki; and claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karasawa et al. and further in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application JP 10-623396 to Hiroshi. Due to the amendments made to presently pending independent claim 1 such that it now includes the features of “objected to” claim 1, and due to the fact that the other claims under rejection depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date December 17, 2007

By Phillip J. Articola

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 945-6162
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

Pavan K. Agarwal
Registration No. 40,888

Phillip J. Articola
Registration No. 38,819